

Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, Pa.,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

March 14, 1883.

Sir:

In compliance with your request I have examined into the matter of the monthly reports of coin transactions asked for by the Director, and have the honor to report:

The balance sheet (daily) and vouchers of the Cashier are daily audited by the Bookkeeper, and the balances on hand by separate accounts by him ascertained and noted. There is no difficulty whatever in verifying the accuracy of the debit and credit entries on the Cashier's Voucher, or upon his daily balance sheet where those entries appear. But ~~the~~ the payments on Gold and Silver Certificates of deposit are always mixed - that is to say, silver is found in gold deposits and gold in silver deposits, and payments are made in kind as indicated on the face of the Certificates. Besides this, less than a dollar, though expressed as gold, must be paid in small silver, yet is, as we take credit on our books, charged up as gold.

In order to enable the bookkeeper to verify the reports asked

Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, Pa.,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

188

of the Cashier by the Director, it would require the book of original entry in the Cashier's office to be so ruled as to permit the minutes of payments to be entered separately; moreover, the entries would have to be made at the moment of payment, else the payment of fifty cents in gold on a Certificate might be entered as of silver, and vice versa. In paying warrants drawn upon the Bullion Fund, the Cashier aims to follow the directions on the face of the Certificate. He may pay less than a dollar and more than seventy five cents, in gold and silver, as will no doubt occur to the Director on reflection. But the Cashier cannot retain in memory the details of a single transaction among several hundred in a day. Nor can he stop to enter up a voucher while several persons are in waiting. To keep such a record in the Cashier's Office would consume much valuable time, and time which must be given to current business if the business reputation of the Mint is to be maintained. Not only this, but in the press of business slight errors of figures will occur, and one trifling error in specific entries like

Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, Pa.,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

, 188

those absolutely required to enable the bookkeeper or auditor to verify the reports by vouchers would throw the whole matter into confusion. The complex nature of the entries would mislead the average mind.

But were the Cashier to attempt to keep such a blotter as the reports seem to demand it would not enable the bookkeeper to verify the itemized reports. He would have to keep another book exactly like that used by the Cashier, and as he would never know how mixed payments were made, he would have to make a daily comparison with the Cashier's book. There would be no check to the system whatever, and the auditor at Washington would only see confusion in detail while able to see harmony and order in the aggregate. Men who handle money are never required to keep books beyond simple debit and credit entries, so far as large businesses are concerned. The reason for this exemption must be obvious, I suppose, and need not be set forth here. But

Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, Pa.,
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

188

The Cashier cannot make such reports verifiable in the minute details without keeping an elaborate set of books. In fact, he must post his books daily, exactly as a book keeper does. I do not suppose the Director means to compel the Cashier to keep books beyond a blotter, though the reports suggested involve much more than that simple system.

In conclusion, I hope you will allow me to say that I do not shrink from any labor that is practicable in any place. The work required is not practicable, unless the Cashier is to be converted into a book-keeper pure and simple.

Very Respectfully

W. H. Cobb
Cash

Hon. A. Gordon Snowden
Superintendent

268

Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, Pa.,

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

March 14, 1883.

M. H. Cobb

~~Superintendent~~
Cassier

Impracticability of
 certain Monthly Reports
 of Coin transactions
 required by the Director
 of the Mint.

No. of Enclosures,

Rec'd Mch 14/83

[Abstract:] Impracticability of certain Monthly Reports of Coin transactions required by the Director of the Mint.

Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, Pa.,
Superintendent's Office,
March 14, 1883

Sir:

In compliance with your request I have examined into the matter of the monthly reports of coin transactions asked for by the Director, and have the honor to report:

The balance sheet (daily) and vouchers of the Cashier are daily audited by the Book Keeper, and the balances on hand by separate accounts by him ascertained and noted. There is no difficulty whatever in verifying the accuracy of the debit and credit entries on the Cashier's Blotter, or upon his daily balance sheet when those entries appear. But the payments on Gold and silver certificates of deposit are always mixed – that is to say, silver is found in gold deposits and gold in silver deposits, and payments are made in kind as indicated on the face of the certificates. Beside this, less than a dollar, though expressed as gold, receipt be paid in small silver, yet is, as we take credit on our books, charged up as gold.

In order to enable the book keeper to verify the reports asked of the Cashier by the Director, it would require the book of original entry in the Cashier's office to be so ruled as to permit the renitence of payments to be entered separately; moreover, the entries would have to be made at the moment of payment, else the payment of fifty cents in gold on a certificate might be entered as of silver, and vice versa. In paying warrants drawn upon the Bullion Fund, the Cashier aims to follow the directions on the fold of the certificate. He may pay less than a dollar and more than seventy five cents, in gold and silver, as will no doubt occur to the Director on reflection. But the Cashier cannot retain in memory the details of a single transaction among several hundred in a day. Nor can he stop to enter up a voucher while second persons are in waiting. To keep such a record in the Cashier's Office would consume much valuable time, and time which must be given to current business of the business reputation of the Mint is to be maintained. Not only this, but in the press of business slight errors of figures will occur, one trifling error in specific entries like those absolutely required to enable the book keeper or auditor to verify the reports by vouchers would throw the whole matter into confusion. The complex nature of the entries would mislead the average mind.

But were the Cashier to attempt to keep such a blotter as the reports seem to demand it would not enable the book keeper to verify the itemized reports. He would have to keep another book exactly like that used by the Cashier, and as he would never know how mixed payments were made, he would have to make a daily comparison with the Cashier's book. There would be no check to the system whatever, and the auditor at Washington would only see confusion in detail while able to see harmony and order in the aggregate. Men who handle money are never required to keep books beyond simple debit and credit entries, so far as large businesses are concerned. The reason for this exemption must be obvious, I suppose, and need not be set forth here. But the Cashier cannot make such reports verifiable in the minute details without keeping

an elaborate set of books. In fact, he must post his books daily, exactly as a book keeper does. I do not suppose the Director means to compel the Cashier to keep books beyond a blotter, though the reports requested involve much more than that simple system.

In conclusion, I hope you will allow me to say that I do not shrink from any labor that is practicable in my place. The work required is not practicable, unless the Cashier is to be converted into a book-keeper pure and simple.

Very Respectfully,
M.H. Cobb
Cash.

Hon. A. Loudon Snowden
Superintendent